1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

175 Estonia under Russian Czars. Although Estonia and Livonia were now nominally Russian governed, the actual and all-powerful ruler of these provinces was the German nobility. The country was badly devastated by the long war and deportations, and the population was pitifully diminished. For those peasants who had survived the horrors of the war, serfdom now became unbearable. But when Czarina Catharina II tried to improve their lot, she met the almost unanimous resistance of the nobles. At the end of the eighteenth century the liberal ideas of Western Europe had reached the Baltic provinces and some of the nobles favored them, especially the younger ones who had studied abroad. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the reign of Alexander I, liberalism in Russia had gained ascendancy and

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l:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

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agrarian reforms were planned to prevent further uprisings such as occurred in northern Estonia, where the position of the peasants had remained considerably worse than in other areas. After certain reform legislation had been passed, making the position of the peasants approximately equivalent to their position in Swedish times, the income of the estate owners had remarkably diminished. In order to improve their lot, the Baltic nobility then recommended the liberation of the peasants from serfdom on the condition that the land belong entirely to the nobility. In 1816 the peasants in Estonia were liberated, and, in Livonia, in 1819. They were now free to rent the land and to pay this rental with their labor. Until 1860 this labor slavery existed. To further add to the woes of the landless, the nobility imposed restrictions upon residence

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changes. This "liberation" by no means improved the life of the peasants and, as a result, uprisings occurred in the 1840's in Livonia, where a widespread change to the Greek Catholic faith was also taking place in the hope that the priests would protect the peasants against the land owners.

By now the estates were undergoing an economic crisis and new agricultural methods were being introduced which demanded more capital and more manpower. As a consequence, the estate owners were forced to suggest new agrarian legislation providing the peasants ownership of a certain part of the land, the right to pay rent in money, and the right to buy land titles. Czar Alexander II enacted the laws for Estonia in 1856 and for Livonia in 1860. By 1863 all change of residence restrictions had

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been abolished. Now the Estonian peasant was a free man and many peasants immediately rushed to settle in the cities. During the two decades which followed (1860-1880), called the National Awakening, the Estonian people grew into a self-conscious nation.

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The National Awakening and post-Awakening period. The main task which took the lion's share of energy was the buying up of land titles.[1] This was slow in northern Estonia, but in southern and central Estonia, where soil was more fertile, it was carried out more rapidly. Soon a wealthy and independent class of Estonian farmers, able to send their children to city schools and universities, grew up. This was the beginning of the Estonian educated class in the cities, from which came outstanding leaders in the national movement. As a result of

[1] [for background, see cat. 116, pp. 25-26 -- Analyst]

669 Communist Party was outlawed and the Estonian people grew more and more suspicious of Communist propaganda, and the trend in Estonian politics went further and further to the right.

423 The agrarian law, one of the most farsighted and basic legislations of the new republic, enabled the Estonian authorities to carry out wide agrarian reforms during the years 1919-1926. Before that, Estonian farmers had held about 1.7 million hectares, or 42 per cent of the agricultural land, while 2.4 million hectares, or 58 per cent belonged to only 1,149 large estates, owned mainly by the German gentry. The [423] Estonian Government expropriated 96.6 per cent of the estates, paying the owners compensation on the basis of the value of land in 1901 and for the livestock according to market prices in 1914. Four hundred of these estates were retained by

423 the State as experimental stations, model farms, etc. Out of the rest of the estates, 55,000 new small holdings were made. These were given to the landless or permanently leased to owners of very small farms. Beginning in 1925 these new farms could be purchased as freeholds on the basis of a 55-year amortization plan. The State kept the forests and uncultivable lands and out of these created 88,700 hectares of arable land. This was in turn divided into 6,600 new farms.

433 The agrarian reform[1] solved many social problems of the young republic, although it made staunch enemies of the Baltic German gentry. It also increased the agricultural output, which at its peak in 1927, was estimated at 247,300,000 Estonian kroons. The world economic crisis in the thirties hit Estonian agriculture hard, but

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 46 - -47- Analyst]

563 as the gentry in estates spread all over the
[423] country. After the land reform in the twenties, the estates were nationalized and the land redistributed to landless people (war veterans, etc.), leaving to the former great landowners only the cores of their former vast possessions. Many of the former owners refused to accept what remained to them of their estates and migrated to Estonian cities or even to Germany, receiving reasonable compensation for their land from the Estonian government.

Approximately 84 per cent of the Estonian Germans during the period of Estonian independence were city dwellers. The Swedish minority was generally concentrated on the northeastern islands of Ruhnu, Vormsi and Pakri, as well as
[167] on Noarootsi, Riguldi, Nõva and Naissaar. In the turbulent days from 1939 to 1941, almost all

1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

241 423 Agriculture Under the Soviet Occupation. The maximum amount of land left to the Estonian farmers during the First Soviet Occupation was 30 hectares (72 acres); during the Second Occupation it was reduced to 20 ha. (38 acres). At the same time, small 12-hectare patches of land were given to new settlers and over one hundred big state farms (sovkhozes)were founded. These new 12-ha. farms were uneconomical and not self-supporting, and furthermore, the terms of their leases were too short, the taxes and production requirements too heavy. For these reasons many tenants gave them back to the State, and as a result, there occurred an 11 per cent decrease in the cultivation of arable land. As the other farmers were also very heavily burdened with taxes and requisitions, private farming was ruined and kolkhozation was

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1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

241 effected.
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The first collective farm was established in Estonia in 1947. Latest reports from Estonia reveal that forcible kolkhozation has been by now almost completed (98 per cent). The workers are permitted to keep 0.5 ha. per family for gardening purposes. Regardless of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the kolkhoz system, it provides for the Soviets an easy way to control the workers. The Soviet leaders' official claim has always been that the productivity of large kolkhozes of the U.S.S.R. is much higher than that of the small farms of Estonia, while E. Poom in his comparative study of Soviet and Estonian agricultural achievements indicates that the productivity of Estonia's small farms was in every respect far higher than that of the collective farms of the Soviet Union. The

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Annex "A," Subparagraph 3a,

Economic Background

## AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL

423 By the end of the last century the economic condition of the Vepsians had become disturbing. Several areas which they had long considered their own came, due to a division of the land, into the hands of the forest industrialists. Thus, for instance, in the southernmost community inhabited by the Vepsians, Borisovshchino, only 18,683 desyatins (1 desyatina = 2.7 acres) of the total of 138,514 desyatins of land were still in the possession of the Vepsian peasants. Moreover, the owners of the forests, who lived in Petersburg, gained sole right to the use of the lakes which were situated on their estates. One can understand the dissatisfaction of the Vepsians whose slash-and-burn activities and fishing were now considerably restricted, while at the same time their population was increasing. Several law-suits resulted in which the Vepsians tried desperately to regain their rights to the lands settled by their forefathers.

241 Agriculture and cattle-breeding. The Vepsians' main means of livelihood are agriculture and cattle-breeding. In 1897, 90.73 per cent of the Vepsians were engaged in farming. This situation has continued

241 unchanged to recent times; in 1927 the percentage of farmers among the Vepsians was said to be "more than 90 per cent." Barley, rye, oats, potatoes, turnips, cabbage, and flax were grown. Agriculture was not sufficient, however, to maintain a decent standard of living for the people and, in some places, until the introduction of the kolkhoz system, it was left to the
• [423] care of women and children. During the czarist regime the land was owned by the mir (village community) and it was divided between the peasants for only temporary tillage. Under Soviet rule the land belongs to the State and is distributed to the kolkhozes and sovkhozes.

241 412 Vepsian agricultural implements and methods of tillage have been very primitive. N. S. Rozov, who in 1926 made a field trip to the Middle Vepsians, did not see a single iron plough or iron harrow, and the peasants were generally using harrows made of branches. According to Ianson's information (published in 1929) more than 90 per cent of the Vepsian peasants in Leningrad oblast used the three-field system, and the same percentage employed only wooden implements.

241 A slash-and-burn economy was practised in all Vepse at least until the 1920's. In North Vepse the peasants got by this means their best flax and turnip land mainly from young hardwood forests. Since the newly-won lands for cultivation were usually far away from the villages and there were no roads leading to

4: Indiana U. S 4,5 1955. RG4 Estonia RG4 Livonians

Annex "A," Subparagraph 5
Economic Background -

## AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL

423 241 In former times the Livonians were the tenants of two estates--the West Livonians of the Popen estate and the East Livonians of the Dondangen estate. Especially bad was the situation of the West Livonians. The farmers here had only one to four hectares, for which they had to pay high rent and fulfil several other obligations, such as delivery of wood for the township and the village pastor, repairing of roads, gathering hay and so on. The situation in East Livonia was somewhat better, since the farms there were bigger (4-8 hectares of arable land and 25-50 hectares of meadow), the soil was better and the lease conditions were more favorable. The baron of Dondangen sold the farms to the Livonians some time before the end of the czarist rule, while the West Livonians remained tenants until the beginning of the Latvian Republic.

241 [439] The agriculture of the Livonians is not highly productive. The main summer grains which are grown are barley, oats and summer rye. The deficit in grain was in former time eked out by imports from Saaremaa (in Estonia), and, since 1920, from Latvia. Only potatoes give a good yield. For fertilizer, the Livonians use manure and brown seaweed. Agricultural implements are rather primitive.

5: Amer. Russ. Inst. (no date) 1950 RG4 Estonia RG4

[Estonian constitution as of November, 1947]



472 Art. 8. Alongside the socialist system of economy in the Estonian SSR the law permits the small private economy of individual peasants, artisans and handicraftsmen and small private industrial and trading enterprises.

423 Art. 9. The land occupied by peasant holdings as provided by law is secured for their use free of charge and for an unlimited time.

421 Art. 10. The personal property right of citizens in their incomes and savings from work, in their dwelling houses and subsidiary home enterprises, in articles of domestic economy and use and articles of personal use and convenience, as well as the right of citizens to inherit personal property, is protected by law.

471 185 Art. 11. The economic life of the Estonian SSR is determined and directed by the state national-economic plan, with the aim of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural standards of the working people, of consolidating the independence of the USSR and strengthening its defensive capacity.

461 Art. 12. Work in the Estonian SSR is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat."

The principle applied in the Estonian SSR is that of socialism: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work."

## Chapter II. The State Structure

642 Art. 13. For the purpose of mutual assistance among the Union Republics along economic and political lines, as well as along the line of defence, the Estonian SSR voluntarily united with the other equal Soviet Socialist Republics, namely:

The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic,
The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic and
The Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic

in a federal state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Proceeding from the aforesaid, the Estonian SSR ensures to the USSR, as represented by its higher organs of state power and organs of state administration, the rights defined in Art. 14 of the Constitution of the USSR.

11: Scheffer O-4,5 (ca. 1660) 1704

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the Ignorance and Careleſneſs of the Country Clergy; but ſince by the Care of the *Swediſh* Kings, a Yearly Synod has been Convocated at *Rival*, for the regulation of Church-Affairs, and Examination of the Clergy-Men; it has been found by experience, that beſides their unfitneſs for Devotion, by reaſon of the conſtant Fatigues they are forced to undergo, their antient Idolatry and Superſtition, has taken ſo deep root among them, as not to be quite extirpated by the Art of Man; for ſuch is their Inclination for Sorcery, that they are of Opinion their Cattel cannot thrive without it; for which reaſon, Fathers and Mothers among theſe Peaſants, are as careful to inſtruct their Children in it, as we do in the Cathechiſm and other good Morals. To elude the Effects of Charms, they never kill a Beaſt, or make a Slaughter, but they throw ſome part away, upon which the effect of the Charm is to fall; nay, they are ſo far entangled in Superſtition, that if within a few Weeks after Baptiſm, the Child happen to fall ill, or pine away, they Rebaptize it, alledging, that the firſt Name was not agreable to its Conſtitution, tho' very ſevere Laws have been enacted againſt it. The worſt of all is, that they are ſo Tenacious of theſe Superſtitions, and ſo obſtinate in the perſeverance of their antient Cuſtoms, that nothing is able to divert them from it. Of this there have been ſeveral Inſtances of late Years; for theſe Peaſants, as I told you before, being not permitted to purchaſe any Lands, but obliged to live upon the Allotments granted to them by their Lords, for the bare ſuſtenance of their Families, will ſometimes cut or burn down ſome Woods, and Manure the Ground, which produces good Wheat; this they hide for Sale; but if they happen to be catch'd, they are ſtrip'd to the middle, and ty'd to a Poſt, where they are ſoundly whipt with a Switch, till the Blood iſſues forth on all Sides; I ſay, there are many Inſtances of ſuch among the *Livonian* Peaſants, who rather than redeem this Chaſtiſement by a ſmall pecuniary Mulct of about 18 or 16 Pence, have choſen to ſubmit readily to the Puniſhment, alledging, that rather than introduce any Novelty of this Kind, they would ſuffer the ſame Chaſtiſement their Fore-fathers uſed to do before them.

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